

CITY OF ISSAQUAH

MITIGATED DETERMINATION OF NONSIGNIFICANCE (MDNS)

Description of Proposal: City of Issaquah proposal to construct improvements, within existing City right-of-way, on the west side of East Lake Sammamish Parkway (ELSP) from Issaquah-Fall City Road to SE 56th St. Improvements include adding a second southbound vehicle lane, bicycle lane, curb/gutter, storm drainage and underground utilities.

A landscape strip and sidewalks would be added on the west side of ELSP from Black Nugget Road to Issaquah Fall City Road. Sidewalk is not proposed on ELSP between SE Black Nugget Road and SE 56th St because the East Lake Sammamish Trail provides for pedestrian facilities and is located approximately 35-40 feet to the west of ELSP. The project includes a mid-block sidewalk connection between East Lake Sammamish Parkway and the King County East Lake Sammamish Trail.

The project also includes widening the eastbound approach of SE 62nd St at the intersection with ELSP from two lanes to four lanes. Currently, the eastbound approach of SE 62nd St includes a left turn lane and shared through/right turn lane. The expansion of SE 62nd St would provide for a left turn lane, a through lane, and two right turn lanes onto ELSP.

Location of Proposal: East Lake Sammamish Parkway, between SE 56th St and to Issaquah Fall-City Road. SE 62nd St intersection with East Lake Sammamish Parkway.

Permit Number: SW14-00037

Proponent: City of Issaquah Public Works Engineering
P.O. Box 1307
Issaquah, WA 98027
Attn: Gary Costa, Transportation Manager

Lead Agency: City of Issaquah

SEPA Determination: Mitigated Determination of Non-Significance (MDNS)

Determination: The lead agency for this proposal has determined that it does not have a probable significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement is not required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c). This decision was made after review of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the lead agency. This information is available to the public on request.

Comment/Appeal Period: This MDNS is issued under WAC 197-11-340(2) and 197-11-680(3)(a)vii. There is a 21-day combined comment/appeal period for this determination, between **June 18, 2014 and July 9, 2014**. Anyone wishing to comment may submit written comments to the Responsible Official. The Responsible Official will reconsider the determination based on timely comments. Any person aggrieved by this determination may appeal by filing a Notice of Appeal with the City of Issaquah Permit Center. Appellants should prepare specific factual objections. Copies of the environmental determination and other project application materials are available from the Issaquah Development Services Department, 1775 12th Avenue NW.

Appeals of this SEPA determination must be consolidated with appeal of the underlying permit, per IMC 18.04.250.

Responsible Official: Peter Rosen

Position/Title: SEPA Responsible Official

Address/Phone: P.O. Box 1307, Issaquah, WA 98027-1307 (425) 837-3094

Date: 6/18/2014

Signature: Peter Rose

Notes:

1. This threshold determination is based on review of the following application materials: Construction plans and details dated January 22, 2014; East Lake Sammamish Parkway Traffic Report Summary dated March 1, 2014 (ESA); Critical Areas Report and Conceptual Mitigation Plan dated April 2014 (ESA); Endangered Species Act Stormwater Design Checklist dated March 2014 (Gray & Osborne); King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks letter dated April 8, 2014 from Robert Nunnenkamp; environmental checklist dated June 10, 2014; and other documents in the file.
2. Issuance of this threshold determination does not constitute approval of the permit. The proposal will be reviewed for compliance with all applicable City of Issaquah codes, which regulate development activities, including the Land Use Codes, Building Codes, Road Standards, Surface Water Design Manual, and the Critical Area Regulations.
3. Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is conducting NEPA environmental review of the project and will issue a separate determination.

Findings:

- 1) The East Lake Sammamish Parkway (ELSP) widening is one project component of the North Issaquah Roadway Network Improvements project (SHO13-00007, ASDP13-00001), which is currently under review by the City. However, the ELSP widening is an independent project and not interdependent with the overall North Issaquah Roadway Network Improvements.
- 2) Traffic – Traffic volumes linking Interstate-90 and the East Lake Sammamish Plateau area have increased due to new development within and outside the city of Issaquah. Roadways have not been built to their planned capacity resulting in congestion at several intersections. The proposed improvements to ELSP are a part of the City's overall plan for a road network in the North Issaquah area.

A traffic report ("East Lake Sammamish Parkway Traffic Report Summary", ESA, dated March 1, 2014) was prepared to evaluate the existing level of service (LOS) along ELSP and the potential impacts of the proposed road improvements. The LOS at intersections along the ELSP currently operate at LOS C, with the exception of the intersection of ELSP and SE 62nd St which currently operates at LOS E. The existing single southbound through/right-turn lane on ELSP and SE 62nd St causes poor overall intersection operations. The right turn movement from ELSP onto SE 62nd St operates at LOS F with 81 second of vehicle delay, which affects more than 600 vehicles on ELSP during the weekday PM peak hour. This high delay/high volume movement is a significant cause of the poor LOS for the overall intersection operations (LOS E with 56.6 seconds of delay). Because of the single southbound lane configuration and the high traffic volumes using this approach, a disproportionate amount of traffic signal green time is assigned to this southbound through/right-turn movement. This results in less available traffic signal green time for the eastbound and westbound movements, causing them to operate with higher delays than would otherwise occur. The proposed improvements would improve operations through the entire ELSP segment and improve operations at the most congested intersection at SE 62nd St. Construction of the proposed improvements would improve the existing LOS at the intersection from LOS E to D

and reduce vehicle delay by 28 seconds. In 2030, the intersection would operate at LOS F without the project and LOS E with the project, with a reduction in vehicle delay of 216 seconds. The Table below summarizes the LOS at the intersection of ELSP and SE 62nd St with and without the proposed improvements.

Table 2 – East Lake Sammamish Parkway & SE 62nd Street Operations Summary

	Existing ¹	2016 w/o Project ²	2016 w/Project ²	2030 w/o Project ¹	2030 w/Project ²
LOS	E	E	D	F	E
Delay	56.8	65.9	37.5	288.1	72.1
Vol	2778	2896	3226	3,961	4040
V/C	1.0	.96	.75	1.78	1.06

¹TSI, 2012

²Markley 2014b

- 3) Critical areas – Critical area impacts related to the project proposal are evaluated in the “East Lake Sammamish Parkway Improvements – Critical Areas Report and Conceptual Mitigation Plan” (ESA, dated April 2014). There are 3 small, linear depressional wetlands (Wetlands B, C, and D) located in the narrow area (50-60 feet wide) between ELSP and the East Lake Sammamish Trail. These palustrine emergent/forested wetlands are rated as Category IV wetlands, with low overall functions due to the dominance of invasive species, lack of plant species diversity and the close proximity to nearby roadways and development. The proposal would result in 3,895 SF of direct wetland fill impact. This impact is largely associated with widening ELSP to add a second southbound vehicle lane.

Mitigation sequencing was followed throughout the design of the project: avoiding impacts by designing the improvements along existing roadways, using retaining walls to minimize fill impacts, and locating stormwater detention and treatment facilities outside of critical areas to the greatest extent possible. In addition, project construction impacts would be minimized by directing construction staging and access away from wetland and streams. Construction best management practices (BMPs) would include erosion and water quality control measures to prevent negative impacts to wetlands and downstream areas.

To mitigate for the wetland fill impacts (3,895 SF), the City proposes to create new wetland area (5,843 SF) at a 1.5:1 mitigation ratio. The proposed wetland creation would provide in-kind, on-site mitigation. The proposed mitigation ratio meets City critical area regulations and State guidance for mitigating impacts to Category IV wetlands. The mitigation would involve fill removal/wetland creation adjacent to Wetlands B and D and enhancing portions of these wetlands (1,693 SF). The proposed wetland creation and enhancement provides better mitigation opportunity compared to other wetlands along the corridor because the wetlands drain to an unnamed tributary to the North Fork of Issaquah Creek and therefore the mitigation would also improve water quality functions to the benefit of downstream resources. The wetland creation areas would increase native habitat complexity and structure by establishing new emergent and shrub wetland communities contiguous with existing wetland areas.

Wetlands B, C, and D abut the road shoulder of ELSP and therefore have almost no vegetated buffer along their eastern edge. The road shoulder is routinely mowed and highly disturbed, offering little or no protection to the existing wetlands. The proposal would result in 6,800 SF of wetland buffer impacts (paving buffer area) along the edges of Wetlands B, C and D. To mitigate

for this impact, the proposal would enhance 19,177 SF of the available buffer area around Wetlands B and D.

City code also requires that wetland mitigation/creation provide a wetland buffer width equal to the buffer that would be required for that type/category of wetland. Therefore, the created wetlands in the right-of-way would need to have 40-foot wide buffers as required for Category IV wetlands. However, there is insufficient space between the road and trail to provide a 40-foot buffer width around the proposed wetland creation sites. The proposal includes off-site mitigation to provide additional compensation for the lack of available buffer area on-site. The off-site mitigation would be provided on a City-owned parcel located on the west side of 4th Ave NW, adjacent to Darst Park. This mitigation area is approximately 600 feet west of the proposed improvements. The mitigation area is currently an unvegetated gravel pad, directly adjacent to a Category II wetland. The proposed mitigation (15,080 SF) would remove the gravel and fill, amend the soils, and plant the area with native trees and shrub species to establish an effective buffer adjacent to the Category II wetland where none currently exists.

The proposal would widen the eastbound approach of SE 62nd St at the intersection with ELSP from two lanes to four lanes. The road expansion would encroach into the stream buffer of the North Fork of Issaquah Creek, 1,190 SF of buffer impact. The road expansion has been designed to minimize this impact by eliminating street standard sidewalks, bicycle lanes and landscape strip on the south side of SE 62nd St, and shifting the road improvements to the north to the extent possible given the existing intersection configuration. The impact to the stream buffer would be mitigated at a 1:1 ratio, by enhancing the North Fork buffer within City right-of-way on 221st Pl SE. The mitigation on 221st Pl SE would be located approximately 600 to 800 feet northwest of the impacted area. At this location, the North Fork is currently only 10 to 15 feet from 221st Pl SE and there is little to no vegetated buffer area. The enhancement of the stream buffer with native plantings at this location would improve buffer functions and protection of the stream.

The Critical Area Report includes a conceptual mitigation plan, demonstrating project impacts would be adequately mitigated to meet City critical area code and State agency guidelines. A final, detailed wetland mitigation plan shall be approved prior to issuance of construction permits. The final mitigation plans shall include a planting plan, grading plan, and a 5-year monitoring /maintenance plan with performance standards for monitoring success of the mitigation.

- 4) Stormwater – The road improvements would result in 15,810 SF of new impervious surface area. The project is located within an area designated for Sensitive Lake Water Quality and Enhanced Basic Treatment. The project will provide water quality source controls to provide enhanced treatment of runoff from both the new and replaced pollution-generating impervious surfaces. However, given the low grades and limited head it isn't feasible to modify the existing stormwater system to accommodate detention facilities. Therefore, flow control would be provided at an offsite location upstream within the drainage basin. An existing stormwater pond located at the intersection of SE Issaquah-Fall City Road and SE Black Nugget Road that discharges to the North Fork of Issaquah Creek would be expanded to provide additional detention and flow control. The stormwater analysis is addressed in the "Endangered Species Act Stormwater Design Checklist" (Gray & Osborne, March 2014).
- 5) Parks/Recreation - The proposal would expand the ELSP to the west, closer toward the King County East Lake Sammamish regional trail. The roadwork would not directly impact the trail or impede trail users, no detours or trail closure would be needed during the road construction. The road expansion could increase noise and reduce the visual quality for trail users. However, the proposed wetland and wetland buffer mitigation plantings would be located between the roadway

and the trail, which would help to screen roadway noise and visual impacts from the trail. The proposed improvements include a mid-block connection from ELSP to the trail (located approximately 350 feet south of the intersection with SE Black Nugget Road), improving trail access. King County Parks has provided a letter supporting the project; noting the project would not adversely impact trail activities or features and that it would improve connections and habitat functions within the trail corridor (letter from Robert Nunnenkamp, King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks).

Mitigation Measures: The Mitigated Determination of Nonsignificance is based on the checklist dated June 10, 2014 and supplemental information in the application. The following SEPA mitigation measures shall be deemed conditions of the approval of the licensing decision pursuant to Chapter 18.10 of the Issaquah Land Use Code. All conditions are based on policies adopted by reference in the Land Use Code.

1. A final, detailed wetland mitigation plan shall be approved prior to issuance of construction permits. The final mitigation plans shall include a planting plan, grading plan, and a 5-year monitoring /maintenance plan with performance standards for monitoring success of the mitigation.
2. Stream buffer impacts (1,190 SF) to the North Fork of Issaquah Creek, resulting from expansion of SE 62nd St, shall be mitigated at a 1:1 ratio by enhancing the stream buffer with native plantings, within City right-of-way on 221st Pl SE.

cc: Washington State Department of Ecology
Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife
Muckleshoot Indian Tribe
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Parties of Record
Issaquah Development Services Division
Issaquah Parks

